

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5290
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL GENOA

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SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEMANDS COMPLICATE PROGRAM AGREEMENT NEG-
OTIATIONS

SUMMARY: THE INTERPARTY NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN AGREEMENT
ON THE CONTENT OF THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM
APPEAR TO BE ENTERING A CONCLUSIVE PHASE WITH THE
CONVENING OF "COLLEGIAL" RATHER THAN BILATERAL MEET-
INGS OF THE EXPERTS OF THE DC AND THE FIVE ABSTAINING
PARTIES. EVEN THIS STAGE OF THE THREE MONTH-LONG
NEGOTIATIONS MAY BE PROTRACTED, HOWEVER. IN ADDITION
TO IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES REMAINING ON THE ISSUES THAT
MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN A PROGRAM AGREEMENT, THE SUSPICION
OF THE SOCIALISTS AND OTHER LAY PARTIES THAT THE DC
AND THE PCI MAY BE ENTERING INTO A "PRIVILEGED" RELA-
TIONSHIP HAS COMPLICATED THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF AN
EVENTUAL ACCORD. THE PSI AND PSDI HAVE NOW ATTACKED
THE PCI DIRECTLY FOR ALEEEDLY BEING WILLING TO
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ACCEPT A LIMITED, SHORT-TERM AGREEMENT WHICH DOES
NOT FORCE A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT OR PROVIDE POLITICAL
"GUARANTEES." IN A RECENT STATEMENT BY PARTY SECRE-
TARY ZACCAGNINI, THE DC SEEMS TO HAVE STIFFENED ITS
RESISTANCE TO ANY CHANGE IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE
ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT. FEW ARE WILLING TO GUESS WHEN
AND HOW THE IMPASSE MAY BE BROKEN. END SUMMARY.

1. THE POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT AN INTER-PARTY AGREEMENT ON THE CONTENT OF THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM CONTINUE TO DRAG ON, EVEN IF THERE SEEMS TO BE GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH PCI LEADER CHIAROMONTE'S ASSESSMENT THAT "THE CONCLUSIVE PHASE HAS BEGUN." LAST WEEK'S BILATERAL TECHNICAL TALKS CONCLUDED ON JUNE 10 WITH THE CONVENING AT DC HEAD-QUARTERS OF AN HISTORIC "COLLEGIAL" MEETING OF EXPERTS OF THE DC AND THE FIVE ABSTAINING PARTIES. HISTORIC BECAUSE THE MEETING REPRESENTED THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR PERIOD THAT THE PCI HAS SAT DOWN WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER PARTIES TO WORK OUT A COMMON LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. NOT MOMENTOUS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR THE "REAL" COLLEGIAL MEETING -- THAT IS, THE MEETING OF THE SIX PARTY SECRETARIES THAT IS TO BE HELD IN ORDER TO CONCLUDE IN SOME AS YET UNDETERMINED FASHION THE PROGRAM AGREEMENT THAT HAS BEEN THREE MONTHS IN THE MAKING.

2. DESPITE GENERALLY POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS MADE TO DATE, IT IS CLEAR THAT MANY DIFFERENCES STILL REMAIN TO BE IRONED OUT BEFORE THE CONCLUDING "POLITICAL-LEVEL" COLLEGIAL MEETING CAN BE HELD. THESE RANGE FROM PUBLIC ORDER (PREVENTIVE DETENTION, WIRE-TAPS, POLICE UNIONIZATION) TO THE ECONOMY (COST OF LABOR, REORGANIZATION OF MONTEDISON, NAMING OF SENIOR BACK OFFICIALS, ETC.). SIX "COLLEGIAL" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKING GROUPS WILL MEET JUNE 14 AND 15, FOLLOWING BY ANOTHER "COLLEGIAL" TECHNICAL MEETING, JUNE 16-17, TO TRY TO WORK OUT THE REMAINING DIFFERENCES. IF THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL, THE "POLITICAL" COLLEGIAL MEETING COULD BE HELD DURING THE WEEK OF JUNE 20.

3. THIS TIMETABLE, HOWEVER, COULD EASILY SLIP. WHEREAS THE DC AND THE PCI APPEAR DISPOSED TO BRING THE NEGOTIATIONS TO A RAPID CONCLUSION BY WATERING DOWN OR OMITTING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, THE SOCIALISTS AND THE LAY PARTIES GENERALLY ARE SHOWING INCREASED SIGNS OF NERVOUSNESS THAT THE TWO LARGE PARTIES MIGHT REACH AN AGREEMENT "OVER THEIR HEADS." THE PSI AND PSDI, PARTICULARLY, APPEAR TO BE WORKING CLOSELY IN DEMANDING AN AGREEMENT THAT DOES NOT SKIRT VITAL ISSUES. THE LIBERALS, ALTHOUGH PULLING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION, ARE EQUALLY MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO BLOCK A "PRIVILEGED" DC-PCI RELATIONSHIP. THE INCREASINGLY STRIDENT DEMANDS OF THE PSI AND PSDI FOR NOTHING LESS

THAN A NEW GOVERNMENT (THAT WOULD INCLUDE THE PCI IN THE GOVERNING MAJORITY) APPEAR PRIMARILY MOTIVATED BY THE DESIRE TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE DC AND THE PCI. THE DC HAS DRAWN A LINE AGAINST ANY CHANGE IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENT. ALTHOUGH IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE PCI UNDERSTANDS AND RESPECTS THE DC POSITION, THE TAUNTING CRITICISM OF THE SOCIALISTS THAT THE PCI APPEARS DISPOSED TO ACCEPT A MINI-AGREEMENT THAT DOES NOT ALTER THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT CREATES OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR THE PCI.

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4. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE BEGUN TO ATTACK THE PCI DIRECTLY FOR SEEKING A "PRIVILEGED" RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DC. IN AN EDITORIAL IN AVANTI, JUNE 14, THE PSI ACCUSES THE PCI OF BEING WILLING TO ACCEPT A LIMITED, SHORT-TERM AGREEMENT" ON A FEW POINTS, WITHOUT A POLITICAL CHANGE OR POLITICAL GUARANTEES, FOR FEAR THAT IT MIGHT "LOSE THAT LITTLE GROUND THAT IT HAD GAINED IN THE DC'S ACCEPTANCE OF A DIALOGUE." THE EDITORIAL GOES ON TO WARN THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT WILL MERELY RAISE FALSE EXPECTATIONS, AND THAT "WITH THE FIRST DRY LEAVES OF AUTUMN, EVERYTHING WILL HAVE TO BE REDONE, AND IN EVEN WORSE CONDITIONS THAN THOSE PREVAILING TODAY." AN EQUALLY CRITICAL EDITORIAL IN THE PSDI'S L'UMANITA ON JUNE 14 WARNS THE PCI THAT ALTHOUGH THE PSDI CON-

SIDERS THE DC'S POSITION INADEQUATE, THE PCI SHOULD NOT THINK THAT THE PSDI "WILL SEEK REFUGE UNDER THE ALTERS OF THE NEW COMMUNIST CHURCH."

5. CONSISTENT WITH THE DC'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BRINGING THE PSI AND LAY PARTIES BACK INTO THE FOLD, THE DC HAS SOUGHT TO REASSURE THEM THAT IT HAS NO INTENTION OF SEEKING A "PRIVILEGED" RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PCI. ON JUNE 10, THE DC'S II POPOLO EDITORIALIZED THAT "TO SPEAK OF OBSCURE FRIENDSHIPS AND DEVIOUS AGREEMENTS UNDER THE FEET OR OVER THE HEAD OF THE PSI AND LAY PARTIES IS OUT OF THE QUESTIONS." NOT WITHOUT SOME IRONY, HOWEVER, DC SPOKESMEN RECALL THAT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE LIBERALS, THE INTERMEDIARY PARTIES HAVE PREACHED FOR MONTHS OF THE NEED TO BRING THE PCI INTO THE GOVERNMENT. NOW, IN THE WORDS OF THE DC DEPUTY, JUST BECAUSE "WE HAVE BEGUN TALKS WITH THE PCI TO RESOLVE AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, THEY SAY THEY MUST MUSTER ALL THEIR FORCE TO BREAK UP THE 'COMPROMESSO' BETWEEN THE DC AND PCI."

6. THE SOCIALIST ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE RE-EXAMINED AT A SECRETARIAT MEETING ON JUNE 15. NEITHER THE DC NOR THE PCI REGARD WITH FAVOR A SOCIALIST IDEA FOR A NEW GOVERNMENT (PRESUMABLY REQUIRING A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE) WHICH WOULD INCLUDE NON-DC TECHNICIAN-MINISTERS "WHO HAVE CREDIT WITH THE LEFT." THE PCI SEES LITTLE IN SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT FOR THEM. INDEED, IT FEARS THAT THE INCLUSION OF TECHNICIAN-MINISTERS SUCH AS VISENTINI (PRI) COULD WELL TURN OUT TO BE THE FIRST STAGE OF A RETURN OF THE LAY PARTIES TO A DC COALITION THAT EXCLUDES THE PCI. ON ITS PART, THE DC HAS, IF ANYTHING, STIFFENED ITS RESISTENCE TO ANY CHANGE IN THE ADREOTTI GOVERNMENT, CONCERNED THAT THIS COULD LEAD TO A POLITICALLY DANGEROUS VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. SPEAKING AT CAPUA ON JUNE 10, DC PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI STOUTLY ARGUED THAT THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE LEFT INTACT. IF GUARANTEES FOR THE PROGRAM AGREEMENT WERE NEEDED, ZACCAGNINI ASSERTED, THEN A FORMULA COULD BE DEVISED, PROVIDED THAT IT DOES NOT RAISE "CONSTITUTIONAL DOUBTS" OR ALTER THE GOVERNMENT'S COMPOSITION. ZACCAGNINI THEREFORE APPEARED TO

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MENT'S COMPOSITION. ZACCAGNINI THEREFORE APPEARED TO

ENDORSE A PROPOSAL EARLIER ADVANCED BY DC CHAMBER WHIP
PICCOLI FOR PERIODIC METINGS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER
AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP HEADS OF THE SIX PARTIES.
SUCH MEETINGS WOULD FUNCTION AS A KIND OF "CONTROL
COMMITTEE" IN CARRYING OUT THE PROVISIONS OF A
PROGRAM AGREEMENT. AS THE PARTY TECHNICIANS MEET
AGAIN THIS WEEK TO WORK OUT AN AGREEMENT, IT IS IN-
CREASINGLY APPARENT THAT THE UNCERTAIN POLITICAL
IMPLICATIONS OF AN ACCORD REMAIN THE CHIEF STUMBLING
BLOCK. GARDNER

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